



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, October 27, 2009 at the Boards and Commission Conference Room, 301 West 2nd. St. Room 1101.

Board Members Present: Board Chair Linda Guerrero, Board Vice-Chair Sara Marler, Jane Rivera, Jerry Perales, Carol Lee.

Board Members Absent: Hill Abell

Staff Members Present: Sara Hensley, Stuart Strong, Ricardo Soliz, Chris Yanez, Robert Brennes and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting called to order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Board Member Rivera moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Board Member Marler. After some minor corrections to the minutes were made, the motion carried 5-0.

C. Citizen Communication

Joe Kendall, Executive Director, Texas River School, suggested that the pending Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Waller Creek Boathouse be adaptable and should include classroom space, research laboratory and multi-media capabilities.

Elizabeth Gardner, President, Austin Rowing Club, updated the Board on the Club's rowing activities including announcing the upcoming 25th annual Pumpkin Head Regatta, which will be held on Lady Bird Lake. She extended an invitation to the Board to attend

the 2009 Kid's Carnival. The carnival is being held in conjunction with the annual Head of the Colorado Regatta.

Kathy McWhorter, Festival Beach Community Gardens, announced that the club, along with Community Dreams, wants to donate a building to be placed at the site of the community gardens at Festival Beach. The building will be shared with Community Dreams and will have classrooms and space for workshops. She requested quick Board action (approval) since the building may not be available after this week unless they get some positive response.

Patricia Michael, Community Dreams, indicated that the building would be moved at no expense to the city and that they would also pay for utilities.

Several questions surfaced including how close the sewer line is to the building, what licensing agreements are needed, any neighborhood concerns, compatibility, and a lack of a public process. Board Chair Guerrero indicated a willingness to refer the issue to the Land and Facilities committee for further review.

Alvin Cantu, General Manager, Texas Rowing Center, updated the Board on the programs of the Texas Rowing Center.

Bruce Aupperle, Aupperle Company, requested the Board to direct staff to review and recommend action to reduce wave amplitude and destructive forces in the area near mile 1.0

Charlie McCabe, Executive Director, Austin Parks Foundation, updated the Board on Republic Square Park.

D. Briefs

2. Holly Street Power Plant Decommissioning

Rose San-Miguel, Project Manager, briefed the Board on the status of the plant decommissioning. She reported that, as a result of Holly's neighborhood concerns regarding the power plant's impact on the neighborhood and the environment, the City Council issued resolutions mandating the closure and decommissioning of the plant. Units 1 and 2 ceased operations in October 2004. Units 3 and 4 ceased operations in September 2007.

The decommissioning project will include the removing of equipment and other salvageable items, demolishing structures and implementing land improvements. AE Electric Service Facilities will remain on the site. The project will accommodate future site development of the area for public use, to the extent possible.

3. Downtown Parks and Open Space

Jorge Rousselin, invited the Board to join the City of Austin along with lead consultant, *ROMA* Austin, to a town hall meeting to share ideas about Downtown parks. The meeting will be held on Saturday, November 14th, 2009 from 9am – 12 noon at the Austin Convention Center. The meeting will be held to present the Draft Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

E. New Business and Action Items

4. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the naming of parkland near City Hall.

Joe Hoppe, resident, requested that the Board support the naming of parkland for Mr. Albert Huffstickler.

Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, provided the names of the persons whose names were submitted for the naming of parkland on a triangle at confluence of South 1st street and Cesar Chavez Boulevard, south of City Hall. Although backup information was provided to the Board summarizing individual accomplishments, Vice Chair Marler moved to forward the naming to the City Council without a Board recommendation, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding a memorandum of agreement between the City of Austin and the Hill Country Conservancy for a future public trail known as Walk For A Day.

Willie Conrad, Austin Water Utility, indicated that he was comfortable with the revisions of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Darryl Slusher reminded everyone that the endowment did not have to be in place for the agreement to proceed. There were some questions regarding the revisions. Mr. Conrad clarified three minor revisions to everyone's satisfaction. George Cofer, Executive Director, Hill Country Conservancy, also reminded everyone that the MOA before the board was an umbrella MOA and that separate MOA's would be coming before the board as the 35 mile trail is completed. Board Member Marler moved to support the memorandum of agreement between the City of Austin and the Hill Country Conservancy for the future trail, seconded by Board Member Perales. Board Member Lee requested that a versioning system be used to ensure the corrected one would be forwarded to the City Council. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding permanent and temporary use of Sand Beach Reserve.

This item was pulled by Board Chair Guerrero.

7. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding a resolution that supports the City of Austin adopting a ¼ mile parks goal in the urban core and a ½ mile goal for all other parks of the City.

Heather Way, referred the Board to a resolution that addressed a city wide survey that indicated Austin families identified a lack of access to child friendly neighborhoods as one of their top priorities. The resolution also addresses the need for cities to create park access with a ¼ mile to ½ mile distance of every resident.

After some discussion regarding defining the urban core, (defined as south of HWY 183 and north of Ben White Boulevard, west of HWY 183 and east of Mopac Expressway, except including the area between Lake Austin, Mopac, 2222 and East of HWY 360), Board Member Rivera moved to support the resolution, as amended, seconded by Board Member Marler. Motion carried 4-0.

8. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding permanent and temporary use of parkland at Reilly Elementary School.

After Board discussion on this recommendation the Board decided to postpone action and send it back to the Land and Facilities Committee for further review.

9. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding temporary use of parkland at Quail Creek Park.

Watershed Protection Department is requesting use of parkland to be used for modernization of an existing storm water pond in an existing easement within Quail Creek Park. They are requesting 127,500 sq.ft. of parkland with the estimated duration period of the project being 90 calendar days. There are no mitigating fees because the work performed is an improvement to parkland.

There was much discussion regarding the trees that would be removed from the berm area and the possible replacing of other trees elsewhere throughout the park. Board Chair Guerrero had some concerns about the removing of one additional willow tree. There were other concerns regarding a future trail and turf reinforcement and whether the park could be used as an off-leash park.

Emily King, Department Arborist, indicated that the trees slated for removal at the park were past their useful life span and some others throughout the park were partially dead. She added that watering of new trees poses another issue because there is no irrigation system at the park.

After some additional discussion Board Member Rivera moved to recommend to the Director that: 1) the newly formed Off Leash Area Advisory Group consider this park as a new off-leash park; 2) we approved the use of the this parkland for the modification of a storm water pond and: 3) that staff consider trimming the trees instead of cutting/removing them, seconded by Board Member Marler. With a vote of 3-1 with one Board Member abstaining, the motion did not carry. (the motion needs 4 affirmative votes to pass).

After additional discussion, the Board considered a second motion. Board Member Perales moved to consider the park as an off leash dog park in consultation with the neighborhood association and that the park be improved with better/newer fencing, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion Carried 5-0. (Note: the improved fencing to equate to approximately \$13,000 in mitigation dollars not addressed in the MOA).

Since the MOU indicated no mitigation dollars, Mr. Acosta will have to address this issue with his department. In the event that there is no agreement reached regarding the cost of improving the fencing, the issue may come back to the Board with a new proposal.

10. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding Sriva Boat Dock .

After some discussion, Board Member Perales moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion carried 5-0.

F. Director's Report

Director Hensley reported on the following:

- A Prohibition on Alcohol brief (Fiesta Gardens) will be coming before the Board in November.
- The retreat agenda (scheduled for January 26th) will have "Private gain on public property" as a discussion item.
- Updated the Board on the gravel bar removal at Barton Springs Pool and indicated that we are proceeding with the bathhouse roofing.
- The Off-Leash Area Advisory Board is currently looking at possible sites, additional criteria, best practices, and working with users to determine more suitable sites.
- Department mowing contracts are not yet in place. All medians are currently being moved except the medians south. These medians are being moved under an emergency contract.
- Stuart Strong, Assistant Director, announced his upcoming retirement in December.
- The re-vegetation at Bull Creek Park is behind schedule. There will be a stakeholder meeting in November to review the re-vegetation plan.
- A recommendation will be forthcoming on the Trail of Lights.
- Zilker's "Great Lawn" will be re-opening October 30th.
- The Request for Proposal (RFP) is still being finalized.

G. Items from the Board

Board Member Rivera requested information on "How many facilities are being privately used throughout the department" and Board Chair Guerrero requested a one-page fact sheet on the Elisabet Ney Museum.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

